From Tadpole to King Frog

Chris Bremer, Aaron Cherry, Christopher Deane, Lucas Graff, Ian Kelsey, Cody Lewis, Michelle Lewis, Chris Lorenz, Nic Magee, Tanner Sampson, and Shorena Tatarashvili
University of Idaho

Our team completed a service-learning project for Bus378 *Project Management* at the University of Idaho in Spring 2014. *Project Management* is a service-learning course open to any student with junior standing or above. The course allows students to learn tools and techniques to manage projects in any type of organization. Students work in teams to complete projects for community partners, gaining hands-on use of the concepts they learn in class. All projects fulfill several course learning objectives, including partaking in a project team, which uses the concepts taught in class to manage a project from start to finish. Each student is expected to spend 30 to 40 hours participating in project work over the semester. In Spring 2014, the class had 57 students enrolled; four teams were formed.

Our service-learning project started in the classroom when Mike Kinziger, a retired teacher of thirty-eight years, presented his project to our class, asking for our help. We saw four potential projects that day, all of which were designed to strengthen our skill and understanding of project management while helping community partners address a real-world need. Our group of nineteen chose the King Frog project because we were inspired by Mr. Kinziger, who had written a book and wanted us to help turn his vision into reality.

Mike Kinziger developed *King Frog*, an aid for instructors based on his experience as a PE teacher. Mr. Kinziger told us that he wrote this book to help get individuals more active, especially with childhood obesity becoming a national epidemic. In our country, children's lives are becoming increasingly dominated by digital entertainment; in the past, children often entertained themselves by being physically active, which is becoming less and less frequent in the digital age. By targeting the leaders who have an opportunity to instill a passion for play at a young age, *King Frog* aims to bring healthy, productive, and fun activity into the lives of everyone it can reach. This book is also designed to teach any age group the concepts of leadership and team building in a fun and interactive way. This idea can benefit our community by getting our youth to be more active, teaching them leadership and cooperative skills, and demonstrating that learning can be fun. The book provides a variety of the best games for children of all ages. The book gives all of the information necessary for instructors to lead the classroom in a fun and easy manner, while presenting it in a unique and user-friendly template. Some of the advice outlined in this book provides insight on how to effectively lead games, how to pick teams, how to maximize the play experience, and how to discuss (or process) the experience.

In his presentation to our class, Mr. Kinziger summarized the current state of *King Frog*, highlighting particular areas which needed significant improvement, including: its lackluster cover and website, need for copyright, and more efficient distribution methods. Based on his presentation, the main issues were identified and sorted into three categories for improvement: multimedia, legal/marketing, and information system. Our group split into three sub-teams, each taking on the responsibility of resolving one of the categories. Group leaders, overseen by the project manager, headed these three groups.

By the end of the project, our group was able to meet all of the established objectives, thanks to the constant feedback provided by Mr. Kinziger. During our first meeting, when we

were creating our subdivisions and identifying deliverables, Mr. Kinziger helped break the ice by playing games from his book. The games helped us form a close bond with all of the team members and our mentor.

The purpose of this project was not only to help educate students at the University of Idaho in project management, but to also help the community by changing the way today's youth interact and play with each other. Helping Mr. Kinziger develop his book provided a service to the Moscow community. With a better online presence and an updated book, more schools can use his program. The Moscow school district can now use a locally written book in its curriculum that will teach young students how to stay active, leadership skills, and team-building skills.

Being a nineteen-person team, the primary challenges we faced were organizing and equally delegating tasks to team members who had different or conflicting schedules. In addition, the scope of the project was so large, and the tasks were so specialized, that sub-teams rarely were able to share what they learned about how to complete a task with other sub-teams. In spite of this, there were many valuable takeaways that team members learned and team managers were able to put into practice. The project manager, Ian, learned how to manage his time and both of his teams, since he was also working on another facet of the King Frog project in another class. As the final presentation for the project neared, Ian and two other team members had the opportunity to present King Frog at a business plan competition in Spokane. Since this competition conflicted with another class deadline, Ian could not attend the project management class presentation. The rest of the team stepped up to create the presentation and deliver the project status for class.

We also learned the value of trust. Over the course of one semester, several group assignments were due and graded for the entire team. As the project manager and representative for the whole team, Ian was relied on to complete these tasks and inform the rest of the group about what needed to be done. Each member of the team contributed to the project in his or her own way, and by the end of the semester, the connections between each member was strengthened. With the help of Mr. Kinziger's games, each member became an active team player, and through our efforts we were able to produce an improved version of Mike Kinziger's book, *King Frog*.

Information Systems

The information systems sub-group was assigned to design a new, enticing website to replace the old, mundane website. Our main focus was to modernize *King Frog*'s web presence. We wanted to focus on earthy colors such as greens, yellows, and blues to go along with the King Frog character Mr. Kinziger had envisioned. Although we wanted to incorporate some of the child-friendly attributes of *King Frog*, we realized it was also necessary to maintain a clean and professional aesthetic, as well as provide an interface that allows visitors relative ease in their experience learning about *King Frog*. To allow for accessibility on the website, we compressed some of the pages and revised the information to make it clear and concise. For instance, there is now a page with purchasing options through PayPal and another page is dedicated to providing viewers with short instructional videos for each game in the book.

Some of the obstacles we encountered included how to work together in a group when group members have different levels of skill and experience with web design and coding. Everyone in the group was willing to help each other and teach the other members how to code and build a website. One of the challenges this team faced was the time constraint of acquiring

access to the information, passwords, and domains necessary to complete the work. The skill level of the group ranged from low to high, and the learning nature of the project allowed for the team to teach and be taught. Through perseverance and trial and error, the website was completed and everyone involved had a positive learning experience. This made for a great experience for all team members. When the design phase was reaching its conclusion, we decided on a new domain name, kingfrogbook.com, and began exploring a variety of host options, such as GoDaddy.com. Once the best host website has been established, the current website can be updated, allowing Mr. Kinziger to better market his book. The new website will be complete and ready to be launched when he decides on a web host. The work that the IS team completed enabled the marketing and legal teams' ability to work effectively, and allowed the other teams to be more effective, because we now had a physical website to market and protect rather than just the idea of one.

Marketing and Legal

The marketing and legal subdivision was the largest, and because of its size, was divided into three more groups. We had a legal team in charge of trademarking and copywriting the book and curriculum, a social media team tasked with creating three social media sites for *King Frog* along with a manual for Mr. Kinziger on how to utilize these sites, and a marketing team that dealt with operation channels such as production, publishing, and distribution.

For the production and distribution aspect of the project, we sought out different publishing and printing companies to analyze their capabilities. Through our research, this team identified two companies that had the potential to satisfy Mr. Kinziger's goals. The two sites that fit these criteria were Outskirtpress and Diggypod. After comparing and contrasting each resource, we determined that Outskirtpress' Ruby package would provide the most value to *King Frog*. This package provides print options, an ISBN number, and distribution channels for the book to be sold through Amazon and other companies. This publishing option also allows Mr. Kinziger to maintain all of the rights to his work, and with the help of the legal team, the marketing team was able to ensure the protection for all of Mr. Kinziger's work.

The legal team began with little to no experience in trademarks, copyrights, or patents and members chose to be part of this team in order to educate themselves further. As a team of three, they conducted both primary and secondary research to gain the necessary copyrights and legal documents. The first piece that was addressed was protecting Mr. Kinziger's intellectual property. The team quickly found that patenting the book material was not as cost effective, due to the high cost for patents. The second step was a trademark. Legal used the new logo created by our multimedia team, conducted a trademark search, and finally filed for the trademark. The last task for this team was registering the copyright. Under copyright law, Mr. Kinziger's material is already protected if it is registered. By registering the material he can receive legal backing if a case is made against him for copyright infringement. Without this work done by the legal team, the social media team was fearful to launch the sites because Mr. Kinziger's work wouldn't have had that legal backing and could be easily copied and marketed by another.

By creating profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, and Youtube, the social media team was instrumental in creating a strong web presence to help further market *King Frog*. The last task for this group was to write a manual to educate Mr. Kinziger on how to manage these social media sites. The social media sites were developed to assist the multimedia team in presenting their tasks.

Multimedia

At the beginning of the project, the multimedia group agreed to produce a considerable amount of deliverables. Their first objective was to edit the book. The book was split up among the team members and everyone had their own section to proofread and edit. Page templates were changed to make them easier to read and more visually appealing. This team was also responsible for creating a new cover and logo to better portray the book.

During Mr. Kinziger's presentation, one of his requests was to film some of the games as a way to promote his book. The multimedia team chose to film two games they enjoyed most, one was a low-energy game and the other was a high-energy game. To film these games, the whole King Frog group was utilized. The majority of the team was actively playing while several team members filmed and edited the footage to create two concise videos that outlined and demonstrated how to play those games.

Conclusion

We found through this project that while college students learn early how to subdivide a project, truly delegating tasks requires an understanding of how all the tasks are interdependent. Even though the main course objective was to be part of a team while completing a service-learning project, we learned much more. The IS team designed and coded a website dedicated to *King Frog*, presenting information and paying options in an effective layout; the Marketing/Legal group was divided further into establishing copyrights, a social media presence, and an effective publication and production option; the Multimedia team worked together to create a new cover and logo as well as instructional videos that are featured on the website. With the contributions of each group, along with the guidance of Mike Kinziger, the team was able to effectively produce a new vision of what *King Frog* can do for the community.

For our team, working on this project has taught us valuable life lessons and skills that we will implement in future projects throughout our careers. Having this experiential-learning opportunity has allowed us to apply what we have learned in our college courses to a real-world application. This experience provided each member of our team with a greater opportunity for a successful career, and will hopefully translate into each of us becoming influential community members with a desire for giving back to our communities.

~